

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KUALA 03086 140058Z

13

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12

AID-20 IO-13 RSR-01 PC-04 /118 W

----- 082277

R 130956Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4740

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 3086

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, MY, PH, ID

SUBJECT: SABAH/SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES DISPUTE

SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO PM'S FOREIGN AFFAIRS AIDE, GOM NOW LESS INCLINED TO MOVE RAPIDLY TO SETTLE SABAH CLAIM BECAUSE OF BASIC DISTRUST OF MARCOS. MOREOVER, MALAYSIANS INCREASINGLY RELUCTANT TO MAKE ANY CONNECTION BETWEEN SABAH CLAIM, WHICH THEY HOLD HAS NO BASIS, AND MUSLIM PROBLEM IN SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES, WHICH THEY ASSERT IS ESSENTIALLY INTERNAL PHILIPPINES MATTER. END SUMMARY.

1. IN CONVERSATION YESTERDAY WITH CHARGE, PM'S FOREIGN AFFAIRS ADVISER ZAIN AZRAAI STATED THAT GOM, AFTER MORE SERIOUSLY REVIEWING SITUATION IN RECENT MONTHS, FEELS UNDER LESS PRESSURE FOR EARLY SOLUTION TO SABAH CLAIM ISSUE. GOM NOW MORE RELUCTANT TO TIE TOGETHER ISSUES OF CLAIM AND MUSLIM PROBLEM IN SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES SINCE: (1) IT BELIEVES CLAIM TOTALLY UNJUSTIFIED AND (2) MUSLIM DISSIDENCE COMPLETELY INTERNAL PHILIPPINE PROBLEM ONLY AMENABLE TO SOLUTION THROUGH GOP UNILATERAL
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PAGE 02 KUALA 03086 140058Z

CHANGE IN POLICY. CONNECTING THE TWO IN ANY WAY, ZAIN AS-

SERTED, WOULD ALLOW MARCOS TO USE GOM AS WHIPPING BOY SHOULD SITUATION NOT IMPROVE OR EVEN DETERIORATE IN SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES.

2. GOM'S DISTRUST OF MARCOS ALSO A FUNDAMENTAL FACTOR, ACCORDING TO ZAIN, WHO ADDED, HE COULD REMEMBER TOO VIVIDLY THAT ON LAST VISIT OF PHIL PRESIDENT TO KUALA LUMPUR, MARCOS SAT WITH RAZAK AND SPOKE OF FRATERNAL MALAYSIAN-PHILIPPINE RELATIONS, WHILE AT SAME TIME HIS MILITARY WAS SLAUGHTERING MUSLIMS. ZAIN ALSO SAID MARCOS CAPABLE OF REPUDIATING CLAIM NOW AND REVIVING IT AT SOME LATER DATE WHEN IT SERVED HIS PURPOSES.

3. ZAIN SAID THAT CLEAR EVIDENCE OF MARCOS'S DESIRE AND ABILITY TO MEET DEMANDS OF PHILIPPINE MUSLIMS MORE IMPORTANT TO MALAYSIA THAN SETTLEMENT OF SABAH CLAIM.

4. ON CURRENT TRIPARTITE EXERCISE, ZAIN SAID THAT HE UNDERSTANDS THAT NEW FORMULA WAS BEING PREPARED IN JAKARTA, WHICH GOM WILL LOOK AT, BUT CLEARLY INDICATED THAT MALAYSIA FELT NO URGENCY TO PRESS FORWARD FOR EARLY SOLUTION. MORE EXPLICITLY, HE DENIED THAT BALL WAS IN MALAYSIA'S COURT AT THIS TIME, A POINT WHICH HAD BEEN MADE RECENTLY TO CHARGE BY BOTH INDONESIAN AND PHILIPPINE ENVOYS.

5. INDONESIAN AMBASSADOR TODAY TOLD CHARGE THAT GOM ENVOY TO JAKARTA, ZAINAL SULONG, WAS CURRENTLY IN K.L., FOR CONSULTATIONS AND HE HOPED THAT ZAINAL WOULD GET A FORTHCOMING GOM REPLY TO TAKE BACK TO JAKARTA. SOEPARDJO SEEMED CONCERNED THAT A BREAK IN THE DIALOGUE WOULD DAMAGE RELATIONS AMONG THE THREE COUNTRIES.

6. COMMENT: DISCOURAGING TONE OF ZAIN'S COMMENTS ON POSSIBILITY OF SOLUTION SOMEWHAT TYPICAL OF GOM'S ATTITUDE THROUGHOUT CURRENT EXERCISE. DEEPLY PERVASIVE DISTRUST OF MARCOS AMONG GOM LEADERS APPEARS TO BE THEIR PRINCIPAL INHIBITION IN MOVING TOWARD A SOLUTION.
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